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DECORATIVE ART LOAN EXHIBITION.



Entering the halls of the Academy of Design, to look at this meritorious display of *bric-à-brac* mediæval furniture, armour, tapestries, embroideries, laces, fans, carvings, draperies, gems, bronzes, china, pottery, and all articles of *vertu*, one cannot but whisper to himself: "What a respectable thing is Art; how it refines wealth, and lights up poverty; what an education it is, what a solace against all the evils of life!" and the next thing which one whispers is this: "How full is New York of beautiful and rare things; what taste, what knowledge, and what liberality; how thoroughly well it reveals the enlightenment of a great commercial city, that it can and will despoil its walls of paintings, its cabinets of gems, its boudoirs of fans and laces, and its plate-trunk of the garnered wealth of generations, for the benefit of the many!"

Such has now been done generously; and, to begin with what first meets the eye, we must refer to the beautiful tapestry sent by Mr. Belmont, which hangs at the top of the stairs. It is, however, impossible to make a continuous study of this historic art from the specimens herein exhibited, for they are hung all over the building, are not arranged as to races, time, country, or value; therefore present a somewhat incoherent record of that art which dates back to prehistoric ages, whose birthplace was India, whose mid-career was poetised in Greece, and whose maturity is everywhere.

However, through the liberality and munificence of Mr. Barlow, Mr. Belmont, Mr. Prime, Mr. Tiffany, Mr. Colman, and many others, we have a large display of tapestry of all the ages, characteristic and varied. As specimens of the wide gulfs of time, space, and country crossed, we may mention a few notable examples: (122) 'A Japanese Poet'; (116) 'Draperies, with Egyptian Motive'; (93) 'Ancient Persian Curtain'; (684) 'Gobelin Tapestry from Beauvais—subject, Arts and Sciences'; and (690) 'Rich Antique Embroidery in White Satin.'

These are but "gilded threads on Time's embroidered page" compared with what we do not mention.

The collection of jewellery and *bric-à-brac* is especially valuable and learned. A gorgeous Egyptian necklace of scarabei and gold, handsome enough for Cleopatra, is loaned by J. Pierpont Morgan (3). An Indian enamel bracelet from Delhi, lent by Mrs. Eldredge, is beyond all praise. Old Norwegian necklace and pendant; Danish gold bracelet from ancient models; old Norwegian cross—reliquary; Bohemian works of the sixteenth century, are all curious and rare; Italian cameos in gold and enamel, lent by Mrs. D'Orémieux and Mrs. Tuckerman, are so typical of the French Renaissance as to recall Madame Récamier. Old Dutch silver *châtelaines*; old silver Pilgrim bottle, lent by Mrs. Governor Dix; chain worn by the peasant-women of Lombardy; German necklace from Nuremberg, are all delightfully quaint and interesting, as are a thousand such specimens. Certain very valuable *intaglios*, mounted by Tiffany, and loaned by Mrs. Barlow, are among the most valuable and beautiful of the necklace and brooch ornaments. A French cross of the seventeenth century (63), lent by Mrs. Hunt, is exquisite. A necklace and ear-rings, chrysolite and silver, lent by Mr. Barclay, are curious, almost unique. A Danish wedding-clasp; Tuscan peasant ear-rings; Bavarian peasant ear-rings; Creole ear-rings from Martinique; French cross and ear-rings from Calvados; gold pendant set by Collingwood, of London; necklace by Froment Meurice, of Paris; and last, not least, looking well, with all this noble competition, our own Tiffany's work in gold, silver, and precious stones, greets the passing visitor.

The inestimable value and beauty of *bric-à-brac* come in under the form of old watches, bravely. One watch and *châtelaine* formerly belonging to Madame de Montespan, now in Mr. Barlow's collection, is an admirable specimen. Another, a watch by Breguet, sent by Mrs. Hunt; snuff-box of gold and miello; (896) watch one hundred and fifty years old, from Genoa; Mrs. Aspinwall, a watch two hundred years old, before minute-hand, chain, or hair-spring, was introduced, are among the many things.

Of old miniatures there are choice specimens. The most valu-

able, perhaps, is that of Mr. Gibbes, by Malbone, soft and dreamy and full of expression, as are all the works of that great genius; it is a gem beyond price. An original portrait of Napoleon I., by David, sent by Mrs. Cameron, is immensely valuable. One of Philip of Spain, taken during his lifetime, by Rubens or a pupil, and owned by Mr. J. W. Paige, of Boston, is extraordinary, and very beautiful. It is impossible to more than hint at the great richness, merit, and value, of this department.

In fans, the exhibition is very full; (805) a Chinese fan, loaned by Miss Heywood, is the most valuable and curious in the collection. It is difficult to approach the merit of this superb thing; so of (839) a gold and enamel Chinese fan. Mrs. Belmont sends some twenty or thirty superb, curious, and rare fans, some painted by Vernis-Martin. There is one contributed by Mrs. Hammond, very beautiful, formerly in the collection of the Duchess of Parma. Mrs. Astor, Mrs. Jay, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Barlow, and Mrs. Lewis Livingston, send many valuable and beautiful specimens, painted by Watteau and Boucher, and their followers. It is curious to observe that in the reign of Marie Antoinette the sticks of the fans became straight and uncarved. Why this caprice of plainness in a gay age?

In laces the exhibition is very rich, and they are well arranged. The student of lace should observe well the following elegant, rare, and costly specimens: (52) collar made for Marie Antoinette, and presented by the city of Venice; (600) the splendid collection of Mrs. Belmont; then Mrs. Astor's case (537), point de Venise; rose point (1660-1700) very beautiful; point d'Argentan (1620); three pieces Malines, Louis XV.; (546) Italian point, silk, from the Duchess of Parma; old Italian lace (549), Mrs. Mahlon Sands; and a case sent by Mrs. Lucius Tuckerman (553), full of good specimens; (557) old Mechlin chalice veil; (558) Italian lace, with arms of the Doria family.

The splendid collection of Mr. J. W. Paige, of Boston, is a liberal education in itself; and the rich and varied collection of Mrs. John E. Zimmerman demands mention, especially (602) a Bertha of Flanders lace; Geneva point, between two hundred and three hundred years old; (613) Florence of point d'Espagne, belonging to Mrs. Hamilton Fish, very elegant; (616) coverlet in Venetian point, bearing on it the arms of Venice, belonging to Mrs. Rutherford Stuyvesant; (620) insertion point de Venise, Mrs. John Jay; (619) altar-cloth, Mrs. J. T. Johnston; (646) guipure de Malines, Mrs. R. W. Cameron; barbe of old Mechlin (642), Mrs. R. M. Hunt.

In old silver, the cases are extremely rich. Mr. George L. Schuyler sends the most historically interesting piece, in a wine-cooler, presented by Queen Anne to his ancestor Colonel Peter Schuyler, who in 1710 took over some Indian chiefs to England. The incident is mentioned in the *Spectator*. This old piece was pronounced at the Paris Exposition the finest specimen of Queen Anne silver. Mr. Schuyler also sends some very valuable old Dutch silver (1649); (332) a Mayence 'loving-cup,' F. Bronson; very fine silver salver, Renaissance, Venetian, Rev. Morgan Dix; (299) loving-cup, old English, rare and handsome, J. Pierpont Morgan; (351) Gya Lotah, very curious, Mrs. Eldredge; (352) silver tankard, old Amsterdam, Egerton L. Winthrop; (353) fowl pattern claret-jug, Cashmere, Mrs. Eldredge: this is beautiful, artistic, curious, and valuable.

Of course, the china, *cloisonné*, delft, Satsuma, faïence, in fact all the ceramic art, is well represented.

The great treasures of this part of the collection are from the collection of Mrs. N. P. Hosack, who sends (271) two Sèvres vases belonging to Louis XVI., painted to commemorate the birth of the Dauphin; the artist Prévost.

These illustrious vases floated through the distinguished hands of Gouverneur Morris into this family, and are priceless; they are very beautiful. Mrs. Hosack also sends the best piece of Capo di Monte probably in the world—'The Triumph of Ceres' (1014), a large piece in bold relief, also two spirited *biscuit* figures, also brought over by Gouverneur Morris, which are admirable. Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan (a most generous contributor) sends a splendid

pair of Italian majolica vases (1040, 1041). There is an (1060) ivory chair, six hundred years old, belonging formerly to the kings of Delhi. The back-legs are formed of elephants' tusks; this wonderful and unique chair comes from Mrs. Eldridge.

(975) An old ivory tankard, Mrs. J. T. Johnston, is very curious. We must now become simply wanderers amid what is choice and rare.

(970) Silver-gilt punch-bowl and stand in the time of Cromwell, Mrs. J. T. Johnston.

Then follows 991. Twelve specimens of ancient pottery of Peru, *prehistoric*, showing no trace of the potter's wheel (W. W. Evans), come in good time, as Longfellow has just sung so sweetly the "Song of the Potter's Wheel."

(476) A Spanish-Moresco cabinet, inlaid tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl, is very choice; while a reliquary (481), containing five carvings in ivory, is lent by Mr. J. T. Johnston. This is one of the most beautiful things possible. (480) is a majolica *jardinière*, with syrens for handles; medallion containing head of Doge; Medici arms inside—sixteenth century. This is contributed by Dr. Hammond.

Of pictures there is a roomful, but, except to say that many of them are very fine, some of which are not now exhibited for the first time publicly, we will not pause to comment upon them.

The embroidery is replete and rare: Old Albanian antique handkerchief from Cyprus (perhaps that one which Othello gives to Desdemona); Japanese embroidery, with the crest of the daimios; Persian embroidery, 'The Tree of Life'; a *rebozo*, worn by Mexican women, two hundred years old; a fine linen scarf, embroidered with silk and gold from Cyprus; dress embroidered in manila, sent by Mrs. John Hoey; cushion-covers in gold and silver thread, Turkish; a set of chair-covers, sent from England one hundred years ago, and even then considered ancient and valuable; Japanese red-crape dress, embroidered; Chinese embroidery.

The Japanese and Chinese embroidery is the finest, the manila most delicate, the Turkish and Persian most gorgeous.

Of ornamental glass there are choice specimens; one, a piece of the sixteenth century, is especially fine.

(917) Of stained glass we find one magnificent piece, 'The Shield of Austria,' emblazoned, supported by two men-at-arms, executed in 1542; style of Albert Dürer.

(916) Circular piece of stained glass, angel playing chimes, very old and beautiful, from Church of St. Laurent, Nuremberg.

(919) Square piece of stained glass representing the Crucifixion, a superb piece, in the highest style of mediæval art, attributed to Albert Dürer, from the Derscham collection.

It would be agreeable, did space permit, to go into the history of the *plaques*, particularly one in Sèvres (274)—soft paste, 1756—by Taillandier; or the Limoges enamels of the sixteenth century; or the bronzes. Perhaps we may allude to the armour (689)—one splendid suit of Persian steel chain-armour, with corselets, Beasart shield and casque, damaskened in gold and silver, superb; or to come back to the tapestry, which hangs everywhere, and notice 'A Chinese Tea-Party, Early Seventeenth Century,' and 'Alexander meeting Thalestus, Queen of the Amazons,' both rare pieces, contributed by Mr. W. C. Prime, but time and space forbid. The fine, old carved cabinet (467) sent by Mrs. Pinchot opens a wistful door, and one desires to describe the Lucretia Borgia, and the Flemish cabinets, with those of Japan and China, bronze cabinets inlaid with coins. There are antique boxes for jewels, and there are a Persian casque and shield. Everything that is curious, old, new, valuable, rococo, queer, suggestive, and instructive—man's patient labour, women's tasteful work—all is represented.

A collection of this sort would be incomplete without snuff-boxes. Here we have one with false bottom for portrait, sent by Mrs. Woodbury Langdon (130); one of the reign of Louis Seize, sent by Mrs. Banks, a large silver snuff-box (very fine) (756); an old Italian Tiber snuff-box, sent by Mrs. Iselin, would carry sneezes enough for a generation.

748 is a Spanish cabinet of the fifteenth century, lent by Major Gibbs, wonderfully good, and in excellent order.

Mr. Richard Hoe sends some exceedingly rare specimens of manuscript and early-printed books, and several beautiful illuminated missals. Mr. Adams sends (487) a triptych, date 1650, from Perugia, very tall and singular. There are Italian pictures on good background, and paintings on copper of Madonna, Magdalene, and saints; and there is a trousseau-chest of the seventeenth century, from an old château in Normandy, lent by Mr. Pinchot.

There is little or no classification or grouping of subjects, and yet the exhibition is not confused; it is pleasantly varied, and is creditable to the ladies who have so industriously wrought at it. The exhibition opened December 1st, and is to continue one month.

M. E. W. S.

NOTES.

HENRY PETERS GRAY, N.A.—The National Academy of Design loses one of its oldest and most respected members in the death of Henry Peters Gray, which occurred November 12th, at his home in New York. He was born June 23, 1819, in this city, and began his Art-studies under the direction of Mr. Daniel Huntington when in his twentieth year. He studied with Huntington, who was a few years his senior in age, about twelve months, when he sailed for Europe to practise his art abroad in the schools of Rome and Venice. While in Italy he devoted much of his time to the study of the old masterpieces, and was particularly enamoured with those of Titian, who was his ideal in after-life as well as in his earlier years. Mr. Gray was an earnest student, and acquired great facility in drawing, and the richness of colouring peculiar to the school in which he studied. During his residence in Italy he painted three pictures—'The Roman Girl,' 'Thou art gone,' and 'The Billet-Doux'—which gave him recognition as an artist of promise, and on his return to New York in 1843 he was at once elected an Academician of the National Academy. At that time he was the youngest member of the Academy, and his pictures were greatly sought after by the principal Art-collectors of the city.

Mr. Gray at this period of his career was full of ambition, and, desiring a still more intimate acquaintance with the old masters and the Art-atmosphere of Rome, he made another visit to Europe in 1846, and painted while abroad 'Teaching a Child to pray,' 'Proserpine and Bacchus,' and several others. 'Proserpine and Bacchus' was bought by Mr. Jonathan Sturges, and was highly praised by the critics. One of Mr. Gray's most charming works, painted many years ago, was an illustration of Irving's pathetic story of 'The Pride of the Village.' The beautiful

stricken girl leans upon her mother's breast, and her hands are held by those of her afflicted parent; the old man, who sits near, has turned lovingly from the open Bible to his child; the May garland hangs, faded, upon the wall, and through the open window a summer landscape in Sabbath repose is visible. The picture was imbued with the most delicate sentiment, and, as one of Gray's most devoted friends said, it admirably suggested romance and reality. One of his largest works was an allegorical composition, entitled 'Peace and War.' It is a richly-coloured work, but has never been greatly esteemed, as it is too severe for popular applause.

Mr. Gray painted in 1867 a large picture of 'Cleopatra dissolving the Pearl,' a graceful composition, very dramatic in expression and rich in colour. Cleopatra is represented crowned with the lily; in her right hand is a golden chalice, and in her left hand, held between the tips of her delicate fingers, is the lustrous pearl which is to be sacrificed. The picture excited considerable adverse criticism in the newspapers, but it did not suffer in the estimation of connoisseurs, and was soon placed permanently in a private collection. Mr. Gray succeeded to the presidency of the National Academy of Design on the resignation of Mr. Huntington in 1869. He retired in 1871, and in the autumn of that year went to Florence. During this visit to Italy he painted one of his largest works—'The Origin of the American Flag,' an ideal in illustration of Drake's famous poem, which remained in his studio unsold at his death, and two of his best heads, 'The Flower of Fiesole,' and 'The Model of Cadore.' 'The Flower of Fiesole' we esteem his most refined and graceful work; it combines all of Mr. Gray's finer qualities of drawing and colouring, and is a picture that is endeared to its possessor.